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Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-ninth year

Identical letters dated 5 March 2014 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

I regret to inform you of the continuing turmoil and deterioration of the situation in the Occupied State of Palestine due to illegal and provocative policies that continue to be pursued by Israel, the occupying Power.

In grave violation of international humanitarian law, namely the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, the occupying Power carried out a military strike yesterday, 4 March 2014, that killed two Palestinians in Beit Hanoun in the north of the besieged Gaza Strip. Musab Mousa Al-Za'anin (21 years old) died immediately from the missile strike and Sharif Nasser (31 years old) died hours later of injuries he sustained in the attack. In addition to the killing of these two civilians, the missile attack, which was fired at an orchard adjacent to several houses, injured several civilians, including a seven-year-old girl who remains in critical condition. The missile attack also seriously damaged homes, some possibly beyond repair, as well as other civilian properties.

This attack was preceded on Friday, 28 February, by the killing by Israeli occupying forces of a Palestinian woman, Amneh Qudeih (57 years old), near Israel's so-called "security buffer zone", also in Gaza. Reports indicate that Qudeih, who was mentally disabled, was shot at 10 p.m. (Palestine time) and family members only discovered her body at 6 a.m. (Palestine time) the next morning. Qudeih's body was found directly across from an Israeli watchtower, with gunshots to her abdomen. For more than seven hours, Qudeih's body remained there, bleeding profusely from bullet wounds, deliberately denied medical attention that could have been lifesaving. In a press release dated 4 March, B'Tselem, the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, noted that the killing of Qudeih marks the fifth incident in the past three months in which Palestinian civilians in Gaza were killed near the so-called "security buffer zone".

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It must be recalled that the Palestinian people living under Israeli occupation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, are entitled to protection under international humanitarian law. They must not continue to be denied this protection and to be subjected to the merciless assaults and systematic human rights violations being perpetrated by the occupying Power with complete impunity. In this regard, we also reiterate the demand for the immediate and full lifting of the inhumane, illegal and immoral blockade imposed by Israel, the occupying Power, on the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip, which amounts to the collective punishment of 1.7 million people. This blockade, coupled with the constant death, destruction and trauma inflicted by the occupying Power, has gravely compounded their suffering and misery.

In addition, Israel has continued apace with its systematic detention, arrest and abuse of Palestinian civilians, many of them youth, further fuelling tensions and resentment among the Palestinian population against the oppressive policies of this brutal, prolonged occupation. In this regard, the Israeli occupying forces arrested more than 31 Palestinian youths between the ages of 13 and 18, throughout the occupied West Bank, in just the period between 16 and 26 February 2014. This brings the number of children who are illegally held by Israel to 187 out of the 5,200 Palestinians currently captive in Israeli detention centres or prisons. Here it is to be recalled that, since 1967, more than 650,000 Palestinians have been detained by Israel, the occupying Power, representing 20 per cent of the total Palestinian population and 40 per cent of all males in the Occupied State of Palestine. It goes without saying that actions such as unlawfully and inhumanely imprisoning Palestinian civilians, particularly children, deepen mistrust and poison the environment surrounding the peace negotiations.

Moreover, we are compelled to once again draw attention to the continuation of Israel's illegal colonization campaign in all its manifestations in Occupied Palestine, including in East Jerusalem. We reiterate our calls on the international community to uphold international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions in this regard with a view to bringing a halt to Israel's construction and expansion of settlement building and its related infrastructure in the Palestinian land. Prior to and during the current peace negotiations we have sent numerous letters drawing attention to Israel's unabated, illegal settlement activities, which have also involved the demolition of homes and the forced displacement and dispossession of hundreds of Palestinian families. Regrettably, these calls by the international community have gone unheeded and have allowed Israel to continue with its illegal and destructive policies without fear of consequence.

In this regard, yesterday, 4 March, Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics revealed a 123 per cent rise in construction of settlements in the occupied West Bank, which includes East Jerusalem, relative to 2013. It went on to note that construction of a total of 2,534 settlement units was initiated in the settlements, compared to 1,133 units in 2012. Such reports, especially those revealed from Israeli sources, seriously call into question Israel's professed commitment to the two-State solution and to the path of peace and rather confirms its intention to undermine all efforts aimed at achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive peace. The grave threat posed by Israel's settlement campaign to the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders is widely acknowledged. Moreover, we must underscore the fact that such Israeli policies and actions, systematically and wilfully

pursued, constitute war crimes under the Fourth Geneva Convention and under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

We reiterate the urgent appeals for international efforts to hold Israel, the occupying Power, accountable for its grave breaches and to compel its immediate cessation of all illegal activities in order to salvage the small chance that remains for achieving a peaceful solution based on the long-standing international consensus in this regard. Moreover, we reiterate our calls, in particular to the Security Council, to uphold its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and compel Israel to end its military attacks against the Palestinian civilian population throughout Palestine, including in besieged Gaza Strip, and to end its illegal and immoral blockade. This is imperative for reducing tensions, promoting calm and allowing for emergence of an environment truly conducive to the advancement of serious negotiations aimed at bringing an end to the Israeli occupation, achieving the independence of the State of Palestine in accordance with the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders, and achieving a just and final solution to all core issues.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 487 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 27 February 2014 (A/ES-10/618-S/2014/135) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations